

5/2 TAKE-HOME SUNDAY SCHOOL

Read:

Acts 2: 42-47

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² Many people devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And more and more individuals began to be saved as they understood and responded to God's Love.

Some helpful background info

- The book of Acts comes right after the four Gospels, which are all about Jesus, his life, his ministry, and his death and resurrection. Because Acts (also known as Acts of the Apostles) follows the Gospels, the book is about how Jesus' *followers* spread the news of God's Love after Jesus' life. They were excited to tell people about how compassionate and amazing their God was, because they had just heard/witnessed that Jesus rose from the tomb!
- Jesus had only ever thought of himself as a "Jew"; however, now for the first time, those followers who believe that Jesus rose from the grave and want to follow the message of Christ are becoming separated from those who do not through the title of "Christians."

Reflect:

- 1) In this paragraph, we hear more than once about “breaking bread” as a new important ritual for Christians. Why was breaking of bread so important for them? Why did this ritual have such significance? How is this like today’s church?
- 2) Something that strikes many readers upon seeing this text is that the APOSTLES, not just Jesus, are wow-ing people with miracles, signs, and wonders. What do you make of this? Did you think only Jesus does/did miracles?
- 3) These early followers of God were so excited to tell people about the “Good News” – that Jesus was really King, that His message of sticking up for others and including everyone was true, and that he proved it by being raised from the grave. In fact, they were excited to share it even though saying it would put them in grave danger. Back then, declaring oneself Christian meant being seen as an enemy of the state and often caused one to be imprisoned or killed. In a world in which we don’t have to fear for our lives being Christian, why aren’t we as excited as these early Christians?

Suggested answers to reflection questions:

- 1) The breaking of bread was the last loving act Jesus left the original 12 Disciples with before he was betrayed and killed. The disciples realized only after Jesus' resurrection that the Last Supper was a metaphor for the way God was going to give up His "body" and "blood" to make everyone know they were loved forever. For them, this was the point of Christianity, and so they wanted to remember it as much as possible. Today, we still remember Christ's sacrifice and the power it had by taking Communion in church and using the same words Jesus told his disciples that day.
- 2) Contrary to popular belief, there are *MANY* instances of people in Biblical times doing miracles (see Exodus 14:21-31, Numbers 17:1-11, Judges 15:19, 1 Kings 17:17-24, and 2 Kings 6:20 for just a few examples). However, these were never meant to point to the greatness of humans, but rather to the greatness of God; the humans were only supposed to see themselves as the vessels, the instruments, for God's power. It begs the question: What beautiful miracles of Love could God do through us if we were truly faithful?
- 3) Maybe the fact that being Christian is the "norm" today has watered down the religion and allowed people to feel that they can think and act like everyone else and still be Christian, when in reality Christianity was always supposed to be something of a "higher calling" than the status quo. Today, fear of being judged or seen as different, as well as the constant busy-ness of modernity, keeps us from truly taking time to make God and Love a priority.

Closing Prayer:

A Follower's Prayer

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have the desire in all I am doing.
I hope from that desire,
and I know that if I do this
you will lead me by the right road
though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, I will trust you always,
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

– *Thomas Merton*